

**Listing of Claims**

1. (Currently Amended) An I.V. flush syringe assembly comprising:  
a barrel including a cylindrical sidewall having an inside surface defining a chamber for retaining fluid, an open proximal end and a distal end including a distal wall with an elongate tip extending distally therefrom having a passageway therethrough in fluid communication with said chamber;  
a plunger including an elongate body portion having a proximal end, a distal end and a stopper slidably positioned in fluid-tight engagement with said inside surface of said barrel for drawing fluid into and driving fluid out of said chamber by movement of said stopper relative to said barrel, said elongate body portion extending outwardly from said open proximal end of said barrel, said stopper having a distal surface; and  
~~an~~ a proximally facing annular boss on said inside surface of said distal wall surrounding said passageway, said boss being positioned so that it contacts said distal surface of said stopper and seals said passageway before portions of said inside surface of said distal wall surrounding said boss contact said distal surface of said stopper, thereby controlling stopper deflection when fluid has been delivered from said chamber and said stopper is in contact with said distal wall.
2. (Cancelled)
3. (Previously Presented) The syringe assembly of claim 1 wherein said inside surface of said distal wall is conically shaped and said annular boss is raised from said inside surface.
4. (Previously Presented) The syringe assembly of claim 1 wherein said distal surface of said stopper is conically shaped and projects toward said annular boss.
5. (Previously Presented) The syringe assembly of claim 1 further including at least one projection on said distal surface of said stopper positioned mostly in a space between said distal surface and said inside surface of said distal wall when said distal surface of said stopper first contacts said annular boss.
6. (Original) The syringe assembly of claim 1 including flush solution in said chamber.

7. (Original) The syringe assembly of claim 6 further including a tip cap releasably connected to said tip of said syringe barrel for sealing said passageway.
8. (Original) The syringe assembly of claim 6 wherein said flush solution is selected from the group consisting of saline flush solution and heparin lock flush solution.
9. (Original) The syringe assembly of claim 1 wherein said stopper is made of material selected from the list consisting of thermoplastic elastomers, natural rubber, synthetic rubber, thermoplastic materials and combinations thereof.
10. (Original) The syringe assembly of claim 1 further comprising a needle assembly including a cannula having a proximal end, a distal end and a lumen therethrough, and a hub having an open proximal end containing a cavity and a distal end attached to said proximal end of said cannula so that said lumen is in fluid communication with said cavity, said needle assembly being removably attached to said tip of said barrel through engagement of said tip to said cavity so that said lumen is in fluid communication with said chamber.
11. (Currently Amended) An I.V. flush syringe assembly comprising:
  - a barrel including a cylindrical sidewall having an inside surface defining a chamber for retaining fluid, an open proximal end and a distal end including a distal wall with an elongate tip extending distally therefrom having a passageway therethrough in fluid communication with said chamber;
  - a plunger including an elongate body portion having a proximal end, a distal end and a stopper slidably positioned in fluid-tight engagement with said inside surface of said barrel for drawing fluid into and driving fluid out of said chamber by movement of said stopper relative to said barrel, said elongate body portion extending outwardly from said open proximal end of said barrel, said stopper having a distal surface; and
  - a tip cap releasably connected to said tip of said syringe barrel for sealing said passageway;
  - a quantity of flush solution in said chamber between said stopper and said distal wall;

anti-reflux means for controlling stopper deflection when fluid has been delivered from said chamber and said stopper is in contact with said distal wall, said anti-reflux means including ~~an~~ a proximally facing annular boss on said inside surface of said distal wall surrounding said passageway, said boss being positioned so that it contacts said distal surface of said stopper and seals said passageway before portions of said inside surface of said distal wall surrounding said boss contact said distal surface of said stopper.

12. (Original) The syringe assembly of claim 11 further including at least one projection on said distal surface of said stopper positioned mostly in a space between said distal surface and said inside surface of said distal wall when said distal surface of said stopper first contacts said annular boss.

13. (Currently Amended) A method of flushing a catheter comprising the steps of:

(a) providing a syringe assembly having a barrel including a cylindrical sidewall having an inside surface defining a chamber for retaining fluid, an open proximal end and a distal end including a distal wall with an elongate tip extending distally therefrom having a passageway therethrough in fluid communication with said chamber, a plunger including an elongate body portion having a proximal end, a distal end, and a stopper having a distal surface, said stopper being slidably positioned in fluid-tight engagement with said inside surface of said barrel for drawing fluid into and driving fluid out of said chamber by movement of said stopper relative to said barrel, said elongate body portion extending outwardly from said open proximal end of said barrel, a quantity of flush solution in said chamber, and ~~an~~ a proximally facing annular boss on said inside surface of said distal wall surrounding said passageway;

(b) providing a catheter having a proximal end, a distal end and a passageway therethrough and a housing having a hollow interior connected to said catheter and in fluid communication with said passageway, said housing having an access valve for allowing fluid communication with said hollow interior;

(c) placing said distal end of said catheter in a blood vessel;

(d) engaging said elongate tip of said barrel with said access valve so that said passageway of said syringe barrel is in fluid communication with said hollow interior of said housing;

(e) applying force to said plunger to move said plunger in a distal direction with respect to said barrel so that said flush solution in said chamber flows through said passageway into said hollow chamber of said housing and through said passageway of said catheter;

(f) contacting said distal surface of said stopper with said boss and sealing said passageway to control stopper deflection before portions of said inside surface of said distal wall surrounding said boss contact said distal surface of said stopper. and

(g) disengaging said elongate tip from said access valve.

14. (Currently Amended) A method of flushing a catheter comprising the steps of:

(a) providing a syringe assembly having a barrel including a cylindrical sidewall including an inside surface defining a chamber for retaining fluid, an open proximal end and a distal end including a distal wall with an elongate tip extending distally therefrom having a passageway therethrough in fluid communication with said chamber, a plunger including an elongate body portion having a proximal end, a distal end, and a stopper having a distal surface, said stopper being slidably positioned in fluid-tight engagement with said inside surface of said barrel for drawing fluid into and driving fluid out of said chamber by movement of the stopper relative to said barrel, said elongate body portion extending outwardly from said open proximal end of said barrel, a quantity of flush solution in said chamber, a needle assembly including a cannula having a proximal end, a distal end and a lumen therethrough and a hub having an open proximal end containing a cavity and a distal end attached to said proximal end of said cannula so that said lumen is in fluid communication with said cavity, said needle assembly being attached to said tip of said barrel so that said lumen is in fluid communication with said chamber, and ~~an~~ a proximally facing annular boss on said inside surface of said distal wall surrounding said passageway;

(b) providing a catheter having a proximal end, a distal end and a passageway therethrough and a housing having a hollow interior connected to said catheter and in fluid communication with said passageway, said housing having a septum for allowing fluid communication with said hollow interior;

(c) placing said distal end of said catheter in a blood vessel;

(d) forcing said distal end of said cannula through said septum so that said lumen is in fluid communication with said hollow interior of said housing;

(e) applying force to said plunger to move said plunger in a distal direction with respect to said barrel so that said flush solution in said chamber flows through said passageway into said hollow chamber of said housing and through said passageway of said catheter;

(f) contacting said distal surface of said stopper with said boss and sealing said passageway to control stopper deflection before portions of said inside surface of said distal wall surrounding said boss contact said distal surface of said stopper.; and

(g) withdrawing said cannula from said septum